

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Dayton Aviation Heritage
National Historical Park



Ranger Programs

All of these program are offered free of charge at Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park or at your location. Most programs are approximately 30-45 minutes unless noted otherwise.

For reservations, please contact Julia Frasure at 937-225-7705 or Julia_Frasure@nps.gov. Two weeks minimum notice is required for program reservations.

The Novels of Paul Laurence Dunbar

This program reviews the four major novels Dunbar produced, and focuses on Dunbar's life and his self reflection through his literature. Each section contains a brief talk about his life and an outline of the each novel. Discussion is supplemented through reviews from the period and other examples within his short stories.

Paul's Inspiration

Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote in a variety of formats and styles. He wrote as a small boy, composing his first verse by age six and reciting his first creation in public at age thirteen. He continued to write up until his untimely death from tuberculosis at the age of thirty three. Paul found inspiration in many things, the poets and authors that had come before him, the world around him, and the stories he heard by firelight crafted by his mother and father. Authors and historians have speculated and rewritten Paul's story throughout the 20th century. Often to suite their own image of him, and more often blanketing his work in the perspective of their choosing, but what did the people closest to Paul see in the poet? Join the National Park Service for a ranger talk on Paul; his life, his work, and the inspiration that drove him to create.

Alice and Paul

Take a journey back in time to the courtship of Paul Laurence Dunbar and his future wife Alice Ruth Moore. Learn about their budding romance; steeped in the beautiful vernacular of the 1890s. How would you put into words your feelings for someone you had never met in person? Could you have the courage to propose marriage to someone the very first time you met? Paul did, and did so eloquently.

The Genesis of Wright Design, from Glider to Wright Flyer

Everyone knows that Wilbur and Orville made great strides in aviation, but few know that they were both musicians! Along with the various airplane parts, supplies and materials, was a small bowl back mandolin that Orville would play at camp. Take a seat and imagine what it must have been like for the Wrights, sitting around the fire discussing their experiments yet not knowing they were on the cusp of an aviation breakthrough. Hear music from the period and learn about the three gliders that came before the Flyer.

Wright Brothers Virtual Aviation School

Our lil' aviators will be introduced to the basics of flight through paper airplane and balsa plane construction. Once complete the group as a whole will compare designs and decorate their planes. From there, students will

go directly into the pilot seat and learn to fly in a 1911 Wright “B” simulator, and then finish off their “schooling” with a virtual reality trip to the Huffman Prairie to see Orville fly the Wright III 1905 flyer. The theme of this program is focused on the significance of the Wright Brother’s experiments to our understanding of modern flight.

A Poem of Steel: The Early Days of Bicycling

Join us for a jaunt back to the early days of cycling. Learn about the wild and strange contraptions that roamed the earth before the bicycle we know today. Expect a light-hearted, hour long talk about the history of the bicycle.

Dayton’s Wright Memorial: the Olmsted Connection (MARK)

Frederick Law Olmsted is the “Father of American Landscape Architecture.” His most notable achievement was New York City’s Central Park; however, his creativity touched every corner of this country, including Dayton. In fact, Dayton has more Olmsted projects than any other city in the United States except Boston and New York City. The park at Wright Brothers Memorial Hill is one of many Olmsted projects in Dayton that reveals the famous landscape architect’s vision and impact on America and its parks.

History of the Wright-Dunbar Village

The Wright-Dunbar Village Historic District, where the Wright brothers and Paul Laurence Dunbar lived and worked, is the home of several historic sites that are significant to the nation as well as to the Dayton community. It is a living neighborhood that nurtures a creative spirit in its residents as it did when the Wrights and Dunbar walked its streets. It also is a classic story of the struggles and successes of historic preservation.

Life with the Wright Family

The world considers Orville and Wilbur Wright heroes as well as inspired inventors. The brothers, their parents and their siblings were also a close-knit family who lived through wondrous experiences together. Their housekeeper, Carrie Kayler Grumbach served the family for 48 years and had an inside perspective on the extraordinary lives of these ordinary people. Learn what life was really like for this famous family through the years through “Aunt Carrie’s” eyes.

National Parks for Kids

The United States of America was the first nation in the world to establish a National Park (Yellowstone N.P. in 1872), and there are now 390 sites in our National Park System! In this program kids learn how and why these special places are established. They are introduced to their role as park stewards, and discover that there is a national park in their own backyard. Finally, they have the chance to “create” their own park and patch.

A Living Legacy: Huffman Prairie to Wright-Patterson AFB (MARK)

After their famous first flight of December 17, 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the Wright brothers perfected their flying and developed the world’s first practical airplane at Huffman Prairie Flying Field outside Dayton, Ohio. They also established there a school of aviation which taught the first generation of pilots how to fly. This 84-acre cow pasture transformed into an air field is the core of today’s Wright-Patterson AFB, arguably the most important base in the United States Air Force. This 30-minute presentation discusses the beginnings of Huffman Prairie Flying Field and how Wright-Patterson evolved around it. The research and development in aviation begun by the two bicycle makers from Dayton has continued at the base uninterrupted since 1904, creating a lasting and living legacy of the Wright Brothers.

Women on the Frontier of Flight

Female pioneers in aviation faced daunting challenges in pursuit of their dreams to pilot the new aeroplanes. These courageous aviatrixes met and conquered physical, societal, and emotional hurdles to open the world of aviation to women. In this program, a ranger will relate inspirational stories of such pioneers as Ruth Law, Marie Marvingt, and the Stinson sisters.

Tree Identification

Join a park ranger to learn how to identify trees without leaves, using tree characteristics such as structure, bark, shape, color, and habitat at Wright Brothers' Hill.

Nature Quest

The program is designed to provide children ages 3 to 10 with skills that will encourage them to explore the natural world around them. The program is **free** of charge can be presented at the park or at your school. Each fun and exciting program is scheduled to last 90 minutes to 2 hours and will be offered on a variety of topics and will always include activities, crafts, and, if weather permits, a hike that will explore the concept of the day.

Hands on History – Archaeology

Join park rangers as we discuss the history of the Dayton area through the eyes of archaeologists. How can you learn about people from 2,000 years ago? What can a pop can from the 1960s tell you about a neighborhood? Children will have the opportunity to conduct a mock excavation and learn about stratigraphy, mapping, and tools of an archaeologist. They will also have the opportunity to make a miniature pinch pot to take home.

Wilbur and Orville Wright, Modern Archaeology, and Your Grandmother's Brooch

A presentation on how archaeology has been used to tell us about the past.

Recycling into Art

Throw it away or turn it into art? Have fun using cans, miscellaneous bolts and screws, wire, and other bits and pieces to make some three-dimensional art that you can take home. Learn some interesting facts about recycling while you are creating. Recommended for ages 10 and up.